

85/ It gives the father added bonds with waku (his sister's son) because
 602 the latter becomes husband to the daughter; it strengthens his position
 with daughter's son, who is waku to ego's son. A man prefers a son,
 however, because of his value in the constant tribal feuds, not only
 through his own assistance and the aid he brings to his relations (as,
 of course, the daughter does through her marriage), but also because
 almost the entire ceremonial life of the father's clan and tribe is
 [428] centered around the males. A son inherits the right to perform certain
 dances through his father and never through his mother. By a son's
 initiation into the various ceremonies the father's social participation
 is further increased as it would not be if the child were a daughter.*

614 Each clan has ceremonial leaders for one or all of the ceremonies it
 428 owns. The leadership is inherited by the oldest son if he is old enough.
 796 If not, the deceased father's next oldest brother inherits the right until
 the son is old enough; or at the death or senility of the second brother
 the son becomes leader. The course taken depends largely upon the
 personalities of the two men, but in all events the son is looked upon
 as the heir to these rights. Such ceremonial leadership makes of a
 person a kind of clan headman.

852 When a boy is to be circumcised (at from six to nine years of age),
 593 it is the father who decides the type of initiation ceremony. The
 other old men of the tribe confer with him as to time, place, and
 other arrangements. The father and the mother make presents to the
 man who paints the child's body in preparation for the initiation.
 868 The father is one of those who teach his son how to hunt, fight, and
 593 conduct himself in the best possible way in the practical affairs of life.
 If the father is a ceremonial leader he instructs his son in the routine of
 songs, dances, and words that make up the great ceremonies.

852 Before the actual circumcision the neophyte is sent on a journey
 593 through the country of the various clans to inform the people of the
 coming ceremony and to collect presents. The father may refuse to
 send his son if he wishes; or, if he wants the boy to go, he may order
 him to leave and to take a certain route. No one else could do this.

861 A father never corrects his children. This is left to other kin (see
 593 mari, nati, et cetera).

593 Fathers and sons often cooperate in making a canoe. A son must
 [42] always acquiesce in a father's request for the use of a canoe, or of any
 of the son's property. A father occupies a place much like an older

* For a full account of the individual's change of status, see Chapter IV, Age Grading.

THE FAMILY AND KINSHIP STRUCTURE

97

For a few days a mother carries her newborn child under her arm in a strip of paper bark. At this time she covers it with charcoal to make it turn black, for it is very light when born and it is thought that it will stay that color unless so painted. In a short time she holds her infant on her shoulder, its legs straddling her neck and its arms clinging to her head. She carries her children out into the bush with her while she gathers the plants, or shell food, for the family larder. When the little boy is about four years old he stays in camp with the other little ones. But the young girls continue going with their mothers, who during this early period start teaching them the countless things they must know about the fauna and flora, the land and the sea, in order to become good food-gatherers. When a boy is to be circumcised the mother always makes presents to the man who paints his body for the ceremony. When the son kills his first kangaroo or emu, the bones are painted and she carries them as she does those of a dead relative. This is to bring the son good luck in the hunt. 854
[302]
856]

If the son's fathers are dead, the mother is sometimes consulted as to the proper time to circumcise him. When the boy returns from his journey to all the local clans, inviting them to come to his circumcision ceremony, it is she who brags about the number of presents given him. She always exaggerates because it is felt that this will also be helpful for the son in acquiring the good things in later life. While he is being circumcised she cries and beats herself. The actions are customary, but they are more than that to the mother, who is deeply affected when she hears her son's cries. The sisters to the mother act in the same way during this ceremony. A mother seldom corrects her child, this being left for mari and nati to do. 857
868
852
[431]
777]

When a child is hurt or dead a mother always cuts and beats her head to show her grief. After the child is buried she paints herself with red ocher to cleanse herself of ceremonial impurity so that she can go out for wood and food with the other women. She waits until after burial to paint herself because the body would not decompose if she did it before. After the bones have been prepared for dispersal among the women she is one of the carriers and is usually the first to get them. [U2]
[604]
861]

The child sees the mother's sisters as arndi not only because they are her sisters but because the father may die and the mother will be transferred to a younger brother of the father, or an older brother may die and his wives will be given to the child's father. In both cases the women would be arndi as wives to the child's father. 765
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A BLACK CIVILIZATION

604
855 When a mother goes away with the father for a trip to distant kinspeople, the older children are left with the mother's sisters, the mother's mother, or the mother's brother. The children turn to the near mothers for food and care with the same feeling as to their own mother.

593
628 A mother is deeply fond of her children. Maritcha saved the life of a young man about fifteen years old when some of the former's clansmen plotted the boy's death. The mother heard of this. Maritcha's clan and her own had had a feud for many years, yet from gratitude she attempted to help Maritcha and stop her own people from fighting him at a later time.

841 When a girl has her first menses the mother helps paint her and take care of her.

861
626 There is constant tribal pressure on a mother to be good to her children. No Murngin mother would dare correct her children in the manner of a European woman, for she would be considered cruel and inhuman. Camp gossip and opinion would uniformly condemn her and liken her to an animal. On the other hand, there is less restraint on a son and daughter concerning their mother than in our own society. They frequently curse her, and there is no taboo on the conversation used before her.

604
606 Little arndi (son's wife) occupies a different place in the kinship system, although the general behavior toward her would be the same as toward the true mother (see page 72). Waku in this case would also be a different person. He would be father's sister's husband or husband's father to small arndi.

If a small arndi's husband runs away she goes back to her mokul bapa (husband's mother) until he returns or until she has been given to a younger brother of the husband.

603 Nati ↔ Kaminyer (diramo and mielk) (mother's father ↔ daughter's child)

There are two types of this relationship since there are a female and a male kaminyer and only a male nati. There are five varieties of nati: (1) gawel's and arndi's true father; (2) brothers of this nati; (3) brothers of momo married to marikimo; (4) near nati; and (5) distant nati.

603
835 Nati always feeds his male kaminyer, but not the female because he and she would be afraid people might think he was trying to seduce her. He would also be afraid that she might think so herself. The

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99

reason for this suspicion is that nati and kaminyer mielk are frequently lovers just as momo and kaminyer diramo are. It must be emphasized that they are not near relatives. 603 835

Nati takes a special interest in kaminyer diramo as a child; he and mari correct his manners and regulate his conduct more than any other relative does. 603 861

Nati is important not so much in direct relationship as indirectly. His marriage to mari mielk makes the relationship between nati and kaminyer much more important because mari mielk assumes a prominent place in a man's or woman's life. The fact that nati is the father of gawel and arndi also increases his importance. 603

Momo ↔ *Kaminyer* (diramo and mielk) (father's mother ↔ daughter's child)

Momo is of little direct influence in the life of kaminyer. She is frequently a sweetheart of his. This is of course not his father's mother, or any of her sisters or clan members, but a woman who stands in this tribal relation to him.

She carries the bones of a dead man, but it does not matter to his relatives or herself whether she does so, for the emotional and social bond is of too little consequence. She sometimes helps build kaminyer's first house when gawel gives him his daughter.

Mari ↔ *Kutara* (diramo and mielk) (mother's mother, mother's mother's brother ↔ woman's daughter's child, sister's daughter's child) 602 603

There are four types of reciprocals in this group of mari and kutara, both terms being used for both sexes. We shall first consider mari diramo and kutara diramo.

Mari is ego's mother's mother's brother, and kutara is sister's daughter's son. There are other mari and kutara, but they have been built out of this fundamental relationship. The mari-kutara behavior is one of the most interesting reciprocals in the whole of this kinship system. The relationship is very close and has a considerable emotional quality to it. 602

Personal names are greatly treasured by the Murngin, and both men and women receive them from their mari, such names being more important in daily life than those obtained from a marikmo. Besides the ordinary personal names given by a mari, one also obtains any nickname that might have been given to mari through some peculiar circumstance in the latter's life. The boy's father decides what names 553

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101 602

whom, his mari is strongest, and the latter's position in both power and relationship is exactly the opposite of his kutara's. 606

Mari mielk also occupies a position of considerable importance. She looks out for kutara when he is small. Instances of a man's having a greater affection for his mari mielk than for his own arndi were recorded several times. Mari mielk corrects the children when they are mischievous or bad-mannered. Chastisement is hardly ever practiced, but ridicule is effectively used. Her name is also called out in the sacred Djunggwan ceremony when a boy is being initiated. She sometimes helps build the house for a man to live in after gawel has given him a wife. She can always be depended on for food. Kutara would also remember her, as he would her brother, if he had killed any game. When kutara kills his first emu or kangaroo, she helps carry the bones when they have been painted with red ocher, just as she carries kutara's bones after his death. She is important by indirect relationship, because she is mother of ego's mother and gawel, mokul bapa to ego's mokul rumeru, and mokul rumeru to his bapa. [85] [86]

To sum up, the relationships of mari diramo to kutara diramo and of mari mielk to both the female and male kutaras are the most important in the second ascending and descending generation, whereas the relationship of mari diramo and kutara mielk is of little importance. 602 606

Mokul ↔ *Gurrong* (diramo and mielk) (mother's mother's brother's daughter ↔ father's sister's daughter's children)

There are two types of this relationship, built on the fact that there are a male and a female gurrong. The relationship between mokul and gurrong diramo is very important, but that of the two women is of no significance. We will consider only the former. The fundamental fact is that mokul is the mother of gurrong's wife, and to her he is the man to whom she gives her daughter in marriage.

There are five varieties of mokul: (1) the actual daughter of ego's mother's mother's brother and mother of ego's wife; (2) the mothers of ego's wives who come from distant clans; (3) the daughters of actual mari, but not the mothers of ego's wives; (4) the daughters of near mari; and (5) the daughters of mari from distant clans. The two most important are the first and second, the third having a very strong emotional content; but as regards taboos the behavior toward all of them is more or less the same.

The whole relationship of mokul and gurrong is one of complete.

461 based on the activities of adults, there is no idleness. Even the young men are engaged fully in hunting and fishing activities and work hard, in marked contrast with the conditions in similar groups close to white settlement, where the organisation is breaking down. Neither men nor women are idle for long, and even in camp as they sit around their fires they may be seen to pick up a basket, a fish net, a spear or other weapon, and work at this as they talk, just as they did when they halted at midday to rest and to cook food. Yet there is no feeling of haste, but rather of method, of system and order.

182 What are the drives, the incentives, which lie behind
461 all this organisation? Why does it move so smoothly, and what induces these people to work hard, so willingly, without any *apparent* direction, control or authority?

182 First and foremost, the organisation is based on the
461 traditions laid down by the totemic ancestors and handed
773 down in mythology, in the culture myths which the natives believe to be a history of their own clan ancestors. This provides a charter for all their activities, it gives them a plan, a motive, for their lives, which they believe are a recapitulation of the lives of the clan ancestors, who "showed the

- [861] way". Each individual is born into this pattern and learns as a child the part he has to play as a unit in the family and clan. But it is not all impersonal, for as a clan member he fits into the kinship network, in which, although his relationship to all the people in his own and neighbouring clans is laid down when he is born, and his behaviour and obligations to these people clearly defined, these acquire a reality, a vital significance, because they are personal and deal with real people. No member of a well-organised society would willingly lag behind in his obligations. On the faithful discharge of these, on his ability to hunt, to bring his con-

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842 [833] it is an invitation to the new spirit to come to the mother from the spirit world. Ideas on the birth question are very vague and the time factor is ignored. Wogburra, who had been taught to read and write and had lived amongst white folk for twenty years, told me that his wife was about to give birth to a child, and gossip named Miniji as the father. He intended to spear Miniji. I asked when his wife had last seen Miniji, and he was certain that it had been two years previously, when Miniji left for his tribal country.

844 [142] Babies are smoky pink in colour at birth, and mothers smear them with a mixture of ashes and water to hasten the darkening of the skin. From birth the child lies in the sun, and as soon as it can clutch a chunk of red meat it is allowed to suck it. A mother carries her infant under her arm on a thick roll of soft bark, but the child soon learns to sit on her shoulder; it clutches her hair for support and sleeps through a great part of the day. Most babies are curly headed, fat, strong, and contented, but as soon as they start eating bush food they develop distended stomachs and become thin and prone to disease.

855 [595] In the better type of family the utmost affection is shown by all wives toward the children of the husband's other wives, and it is sometimes difficult to say which is the mother. [853] She does not always suckle it herself, nor does the infant object to a variation. If a mother dies, the care of her children is assured, and I have seen only two children that could be called waifs or strays.

[861] Children are pampered unbelievably and are rarely punished. The most a mother will do when her patience is exhausted is to shake it by the shoulder, shout at it and threaten it with a ghost or a white man. Imitating their elders, the youngsters learn their lessons and make fun for themselves in the hard days of childhood, though their games seem to foreshadow the strenuous adult life ahead of them. Girls play at gathering food, making huts and weaving dilly-bags,